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AUTHOR Piercy, Garth Eugene; Klass, Patricia Harrington
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ABSTRACT

This study sought to determine the perceptions of first-year teachers in Illinois secondary schools with respect to the importance of selected teaching activities. The study further examined the main sources of assistance for beginning teachers in these activities and measured these teachers' self-assessed success. From the target population of 434 first-year teachers, 234 (54 percent) responded to a questionnaire. Responses indicated that most teaching activities were perceived to be important; however, most teachers said that they received no assistance for 70 percent of teaching activities. Perceived importance of community and student activities differed by subject area. Two variables were significantly related to perceived success: rural district and professional consultation. Analysis of the data showed that, controlling for consultation, teachers from rural districts perceived themselves to be significantly less successful; and controlling for location, teachers who had been consulted about staff development perceived themselves to be significantly more successful. Staff development implications and recommendations are discussed. Appendices contain tables displaying data on demographic characteristics of beginning teachers, perceived level of importance of activities, main sources of assistance, analysis of variance, and stepwise multiple regression results. (JD)

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Staff Development Activities and Sources of Assistance for First-year Teachers

Garth Eugene Piercy

Patricia Harrington Klass

Illinois State University

Normal, Illinois 61761

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Abstract

This study sought to determine the perceptions of first-year teachers in Illinois secondary schools with respect to the importance of selected teaching activities. The study further examined the main sources of assistance for beginning teachers in these activities. Last, these teachers' self-assessed success was measured. The target population was 434 first-year teachers; 234 or 54% responded to a questionnaire. Responses indicated that most teaching activities were perceived to be important; however, for 70% of the activities most teachers said they received no assistance. Perceived importance of community and student activities differed by subject area, $p < .05$. And two variables were significantly related to perceived success: rural district, and consultation, $p < .05$. Controlling for consultation, teachers from rural districts perceived themselves to be significantly less successful, and controlling for location, teachers who had been consulted about staff development perceived themselves to be significantly more successful. Staff development implications and recommendations are discussed.

Staff Development Activities and Sources of Assistance for First-year Teachers

Much of the public's present interest in staff development and, more specifically, in beginning teacher staff development (induction) was piqued by the A Nation at Risk (1983) study and other reports with similar messages. The public's concern for quality education has prompted educators to refocus on maintaining quality teaching where it exists, creating quality teaching where it does not, and promoting entry and retention of beginning teachers to insure quality in the future.

One facet of promoting entry and retention of teachers requires an adequate supply for current and future demands. Wolff and Glaser (1986) perceived a shortage in the high school subjects of science, mathematics, computer science, and foreign languages. Dunlap (1986) reported that the cities of New York, Los Angeles, Houston, Washington, D.C., and Chicago were having problems in the areas of math, science, English, special education, and foreign language. These and other sources note the problem areas with respect to supply of teachers.

A second facet insuring quality teaching relates to retaining good teachers after they are hired. From the population of teachers that entered teaching in North Carolina between 1973 and 1980, Schlechty and Vance (1981) discovered that first-year teachers left at a rate of 15% per year. By the ninth year of teaching, approximately 50% of those initially employed had left education. Dworkin's (1985) study of 3,500 teachers in Houston found that quitting was related to realistic work alternatives rather than to negative attitudes. Among teachers who had specializations valued by industry, 74% who wanted to quit teaching left to enter other jobs. Among those without skills directly valued by industry only 8% quit teaching to work in non-teaching jobs. Such specializations as science, math, foreign languages, and business were those with high turnover rates.

Problems with retention relate to other factors as well. In a study of teachers who left the field, two thirds were men, and 70% taught in secondary schools (Harris & Associates, Inc., 1985). School size or community type also have been connected to teacher turnover. Rural and small schools compose 67% of all schools enrolling 33% of all school children in the United States; 25% of school districts enroll fewer than 300 students accounting for half a million students and 50,000 teachers. These schools are losing beginning teachers in the largest numbers (Matthes & Carlson, 1985). Wilkins and Korschgen (1985) concluded that the largest percentage of teachers in Wisconsin who resigned came from small school districts while the smallest percentage came from large school districts. Barnett (1985) found similar results in large and small school districts in the Southeastern United States.

To promote retention of quality teachers, the profession must stop the exodus of beginning teachers who leave in the greatest numbers. Although salary is not an unimportant issue, 36% of former teachers cited poor working

conditions as a the major reason for leaving teaching. Some variables related to working conditions staff development could address (Harris, 1985). Staff development in general, and particularly induction for beginning teachers, may not solve all teachers' concerns; however, induction would be a step toward alleviating some quality and retention problems.

The interest in induction as one solution to problems of retention and performance has grown in the 1980s. In 1982, educators sponsored a forum on teacher induction at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA). By 1986, Hawk and Robards (1987) found 47 states had some induction initiative. Ten states had programs in place, 15 states including Illinois were planning programs, and six states had pilot programs. Most recently, in June 1988, the Association of Teacher Educators (ATE) National Academy for Leadership in Teacher Education sponsored a showcase of innovative models for beginning teacher support.

These studies and others have identified the induction year as distinct from the preservice and inservice phases of a teacher's career. This induction period is believed to be highly influential on the rest of a teacher's work life determining whether the teacher will continue in the profession (Borko, 1986). If beginning teachers are to remain in the profession, the type of teachers they become is, in part, determined by the type of assistance they receive. Huling-Austin (1989) found first-year teachers changed as a result of the assistance they were given, and first-year teachers who had the lowest level of satisfaction received no formal or deliberate assistance. Without formal assistance beginning teachers either act on their own or rely on the closest receptive teacher at the school. The consequences of no or unplanned assistance is haphazard development of teachers and teaching as a profession.

This study investigated the perceived importance of various teacher activities and sources of assistance for first-year teachers in Illinois. Potential sources outlined by Johnston (1985) were experienced teachers, building administrators, district-level administrators, school boards, local teacher organizations, and the neighboring community. Ryan (1986) also noted experienced teachers, building administrators, and the community. In a survey of 72 first-year teachers, Grant and Zeichner (1981) found formal support through school, school district, university, teacher center, and community orientations. First-year teachers found informal support from other teachers or the principal. The primary sources for informal support (67%) was from fellow teachers, but 14% reported conferences, workshops, or courses planned or conducted by university personnel.

From this review, six potential sources of assistance were distinguished: (a) administrators, (b) professional staff, (c) community resources, (d) colleges or universities, (e) external consultants, and (f) none.

Three local sources of assistance are available to beginning teachers. First, the direct involvement of the administrators is necessary if support for first-year teachers is to be effective. Administrators, especially principals, have been suggested as persons who can turn first year teachers' disenchantment into a period of growth and development (Ryan, 1986). Fellow professional staff was found to provide assistance to beginning teachers in the majority of cases. This assistance is sometimes formalized through assigned mentors, but may be

present even if not formalized. A formal mentor system is present in much of the literature of induction programs. However, in Grant and Zeichner's (1981) study of a formal "buddy system," only 15% of new teachers reported the buddy as most helpful. Community was the third local source of assistance. The community is an essential element because beginning teachers need to understand the larger environment in which the school is contained. Johnston (1985) believed that being knowledgeable about the first-year teacher's neighborhood community was vital. Community assistance was noted by Matthes and Carlson (1985) when they discussed beginning teachers' lack of preparation in dealing with the differences among rural, urban, and suburban communities.

Two additional sources of assistance outside the local school community are universities and external consultants. Universities were mentioned as a source of assistance in most induction models. Johnston and Kay (1987) indicated that 18% of institutions responding to their survey were in the planning stage of induction programs, 21% had already implemented such programs, 9% were in the process of piloting programs, and of the 52% that did not have an induction program in place, 46% indicated that they planned to begin an induction program within the next two years. The second outside source of assistance, external consultants, often refers to intermediate units such as educational service centers (ESC). Manley, Siudzinski, and Varah (1989) alluded to ESCs as ideal organizations to provide and coordinate induction for beginning teachers.

An undesirable situation often arises when first-year teachers are left without assistance. Gaede (1978) described the reality shock experienced by beginning teachers who often make the transition from student teacher to full-time teacher in isolation. Although the literature suggests that support is needed to ease the transition, it is not always forthcoming, which may explain the very high attrition rates in the first three years of teaching.

Whether assistance is available or not, the crucial question is "What are the problems and needs of first-year teachers?" Matthes and Carlson (1985) found that it was important for administrators to consult with beginning teachers before providing staff development for it to be successful. Based on the induction literature, we found that beginning teachers' needs fall in four areas: curriculum, students, community, and staff. These categories provide a structure for analysis of the needs and potential staff development activities of first-year teachers in the induction process.

Curriculum concerns have been cited since the early studies of first-year teachers. Wey (1948) observed that there were eight types of difficulties encountered by beginning teachers. Those in the area of curriculum were adjusting to deficiencies in materials, adjusting to the teaching assignment, and handling teaching techniques. Fifteen years later Dropkin and Taylor (1963) found that important curriculum issues were methods of teaching, planning, finding materials and resources, and classroom routines. In the same year, Stone (1963) investigated beginning teachers in Denver and found several problems in the area of curriculum: understanding what to teach, finding time for planning and preparation, and being aware of classroom management in patterns used in the school. Hunt's (1968) three-year study for the National

Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) identified curriculum problems in planning lessons, organizing material and methods in terms of ability groups, selecting among diverse teaching methods and techniques, finding supplementary materials, and assigning homework. In one induction program begun in 1974 (Varah, Theune, & Parker, 1986) half of the goals were in curriculum: planning, instructional organization and development, and presentation of subject matter. Grant and Zeichner (1981) noted that problems most often referred to by beginning teachers in curriculum were inadequate curriculum, inadequate instructional materials, lack of information about those materials, and lack of knowledge about the process of reviewing textbooks. Veenman's (1984) review of the research on beginning teachers found problems with organizing classwork and with insufficient materials and supplies, issues that had been reported since the 1930s.

First-year teachers have consistently mentioned concerns related to students as well as curriculum. Wey (1948) identified problems with student control and discipline, adapting to the needs, interests, and abilities of pupils, and motivating pupil interest and response. Most studies on beginning teachers mention needs in the areas of discipline and student motivation (Wey, 1948; Dropkin & Taylor, 1963; Stone, 1963; Hunt, 1968; Grant & Zeichner, 1981; Veenman, 1984; Johnston, 1985; Lipham, Rankin, & Hoeh, 1985; Manley, Siudzinski, & Varah, 1989). Additional student problems were teaching retarded or slower classes, establishing rapport while maintaining authority, accepting erratic behavior, and evaluating and reporting pupil achievement (Stone, 1963). Veenman's (1984) review of beginning teachers' concerns cited responding to individual differences and handling students' personal problems. Odell (1989) found that beginning teachers who received assistance ranked instructional (curriculum) needs most important while teachers without assistance ranked managing students as more important.

Two other areas of needs for first-year teachers are not as prominent in the literature as the first two categories, but they are important. First-year teachers frequently mention problems related to the community. Working with parents was one of the top concerns of first-year teachers (Dropkin & Taylor, 1963; Grant & Zeichner, 1981; Veenman, 1984). Other researchers noted that first-year assistance could help teachers with parent-teacher groups and conferences (Hunt, 1968; Manley, Siudzinski, & Varah, 1989). Community relations and knowledge of the community are important skills for first-year teachers to develop (Johnston, 1985; Lipham, Rankin, & Hoeh, 1985)

Last, relationships with fellow teachers and staff are crucial for the professional development of first-year teachers. Wey (1948) noted that beginning teachers were concerned with establishing and maintaining relations with supervisors and administrators. Hunt (1968) discovered problems with understanding the roles of guidance services and specialist services. Grant and Zeichner (1981) noted communicating with coworkers as another staff concern. In 1985, two articles (Johnston, 1985; Lipham, Rankin, & Hoeh, 1985) saw needs in the area of promoting relations with administrators, teachers, and other staff.

Staff development can address some of the concerns in these four areas--curriculum, student, community, and staff. Staff development can provide

effective support if the services are provided from the very beginning of a teachers' career when turnover is most likely. Some retention approaches suggested by Matthes and Carlson (1985) consisted of preschool and ongoing orientation programs, community involvement, pairing new teachers with master teachers, involvement and opportunities to express inservice needs to school administrators, and professional days to visit other schools and to participate in workshops and conferences

The focus on staff development, especially its induction phase, has been a matter for concern in Illinois. That concern was expressed in legislation by P.A. 84-126, An Act in Relation to Educational Reform and the Financing Thereof. Part of the code required regional superintendents "to design and conduct staff development programs" (School Code, 1985, Sec.1, Sec.2 3.59-3.60). The law also mandated that staff development programs supply ongoing education to keep teachers current and improve the knowledge and skill of those teaching. Furthermore, principals were required to devote 50% of their time in instructional leadership. In conjunction with this law, the Illinois State Board of Education began to examine procedures devised to influence performance of first-year teachers in Illinois (Griffin, 1986). Because it has been five years since the State initiated these reforms, we were interested to see if the needs of first-year teachers differed from what earlier studies has found. Also, because staff development is now mandated, and principals must devote half their time on instructional issues, we wanted to see whether beginning teachers received more help and were less isolated than the literature suggests.

This study sought to determine the perceptions of first-year teachers in Illinois secondary schools with respect to the importance of selected teaching activities. It was hypothesized that perceived importance of these activities would differ based on teaching assignment. The study further examined the main sources of assistance for beginning teachers in these activities. Last, beginning teachers' self-reported success was measured. It was hypothesized that success would be related to the presence of an induction program, consultation, level of involvement in teaching activities, and several demographic variables.

Method

Subjects

The target population for this study comprised Illinois public school first-year teachers employed full time at the secondary level during 1988-89 excluding special education specialists and teachers from the city of Chicago. Initially, 485 first-year teachers were identified through the Illinois State Board of Education's Teacher Service Record (TSR). Twenty-three respondents returned the questionnaire and identified themselves as non-beginning teachers. The researcher identified one deceased and 27 non-beginning teachers through contacts with school districts. Thus, the target population was reduced by 51 to 434. Two hundred thirty-four teachers returned

questionnaires for a 54% response rate. For analyses using TSR data, the usable number of responses was 233.

Of the responding first-year teachers, 16% indicated they were in an induction program specifically designed for first-year teachers, and 31.3% noted the districts consulted them about their staff-development needs. And by April, 92.3% still planned to returned to teaching the following year. As seen on Table 1, of the 45.7% male and 52.1% female respondents to the questionnaire, most (42.1%) were suburban first-year secondary teachers while 35.6% were rural, 15% were independent city, and 7.3% were central city teachers. Sixty-six percent were employed in unit and 34% in high school districts. The majority of teachers graduated from an Illinois college (78.5%); out-of-state teachers accounted for 21.5% of the respondents. Those teachers who possessed a baccalaureate degree accounted for 90.1% of the respondents. The researcher divided first-year secondary teachers into seven teaching assignments. The largest was the miscellaneous assignment, which totalled 29.0%. This group included physical education, home economics, agriculture, music, vocational education, industrial arts, music, and art teachers. Twenty-one percent were in natural science, 15.8% in English, 15.3% in mathematics, 9.4% in social science, 6.9% in foreign language, and 4.8% in business.

Insert Table 1 about here

Table 1 shows the comparisons between respondents and nonrespondents on selected demographic variables. Chi-square results showed that there was only one significant difference between respondents and nonrespondents on these demographic characteristics, $\chi^2(12)=26.20$, $p = .010$. Proportionally more teachers who attended state schools responded than did teachers from out-of-state and private schools.

Instrument

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) provided two of the three data sets used in the study: the Teacher Service Record (TSR) and the school district community type file. The TSR is a record of all teachers in Illinois used to determine length of service for the teacher retirement system and state teacher supply and demand. The school-district community type list classifies Illinois public schools according to a system developed in 1984 by Dr. J. Dan Hou. Using 1980 census data, Hou identified four community types: central city, suburban, independent city, and rural.

The third data source, the "Illinois Beginning Teachers' Survey," was designed and used by Joan McGuire, who administered this questionnaire to beginning elementary teachers. A pilot questionnaire was given to beginning elementary and secondary teachers as well as some administrators and experienced teachers. The researcher revised the instrument based on comments and suggestions by the pilot groups.

The revised questionnaire contained items about current staff development, plans to return to present position, graduation date from college, enrollment in university courses, consultation about staff development, and perceived success. Another section listed 27 items under four major categories: curriculum, students, community, and staff. Beginning teachers were asked to indicate their perceived importance of each activity, whether they engaged in each activity, and their main source of assistance for each activity.

The importance of the activities was ranked on a six-point scale where 1 was of no importance and 6 was very important. A scale mean was calculated for each of the four categories by summing responses to each item and dividing by the number of responses in each category. The internal consistency reliabilities for the perceived importance of the four scales follow: CURRICULUM, alpha .6737; STUDENTS, alpha .7823; COMMUNITY, alpha .7855; and STAFF, alpha .5696. These reliabilities were deemed sufficient for use in this study. Whether the activity was engaged in was determined by a yes or no answer. Last, subjects identified one main source of assistance for each activity from six choices: administrators, professional staff, community resources, external consultants, and none.

Procedure

The questionnaires were mailed April 24-25, 1989 after beginning teachers had been notified of either continued employment or dismissal as required by law. A second mailing was sent by first-class mail on May 11-12, 1989. From May 17 to June 8 the researcher called school districts employing teachers who had not returned either the first or second mailing of the instrument. The researcher entered the data from the questionnaire into the mainframe computer then merged it with the TSR and community type data provided by the ISBE matching by school identification number.

Results

One of our four areas of interest was determining the perceived importance of activities by first-year secondary teachers in the following areas: curriculum, staff, students, and community. Table 2 summarizes these results. The perceived importance was highest for activities involving STUDENTS (M=5.13), second highest for those activities involving STAFF (M=5.00), third highest for CURRICULUM activities (M=4.85), and the last for COMMUNITY activities (M=4.32). The four areas ranged from being somewhat important to important.

Insert Table 2 about here

In the highest rated STUDENTS area, first-year teachers rated five of the eight items 5.0 or above with motivating students (M=5.72) rated most important. The lowest item in this area was understanding students' cultural differences (M=4.18). In STAFF, the second highest rated area, two of the four items had

means greater than 5.00: adjusting to demands of a full-time teaching position (M=5.40) and establishing professional relationships (M=5.25). The lowest rated item of the STAFF area was participating in special programs for beginning teachers (M=4.33). Although CURRICULUM had the third highest scale mean, five of the 10 items had means greater than 5.00, the highest of which was managing and organizing instruction (M=5.47) The lowest item was selecting new textbooks (M=3.49). The lowest rated area, COMMUNITY, only had one item rated higher than 5.00: establishing effective communication with parents (M=5.18). The lowest item was gathering data on community environment (M=3.53).

Teachers perceived 13 of the 27 activities to be important, that is having means greater than 5.00. In descending order they were motivating students (M=5.72), handling discipline (M=5.63), managing and organizing instruction (M=5.47), refining teaching skills (M=5.41), adjusting to demands of a full-time teaching position (M=5.40), evaluating students' work (M=5.40), identifying appropriate teaching strategies (M=5.37), locating materials (M=5.32), developing students' self-esteem (M=5.27), establishing professional relationships (M=5.25), dealing with differences in student ability (M=5.23), establishing effective communication with parents (M=5.18), and understanding good testing practices (M=5.03). Of these 13 activities, six were in the area of STUDENTS, four in CURRICULUM, one in STAFF, one in COMMUNITY.

Second, we wanted to know the main sources of assistance cited by beginning secondary teachers given a choice of administrators, professional staff, community resources, colleges or universities, external consultants, and none. Table 3 shows the responses. Of the six sources, the category "none" was cited most often in 19 of the 27 activities. Eight were in the area of CURRICULUM, five in the area of STUDENTS, four in the area of COMMUNITY, and two in the area of STAFF. In 10 of these 19 activities, over 50% of the respondents indicated that they had no source of assistance. These activities were selecting textbooks (60.0%), identifying learning styles (50.5%), applying critical thinking skills (55.1%), evaluating students' work (53.1%), understanding students' cultural differences (50.2%), developing students' self-esteem (57.3%), assessing community resources (52.8%), gathering data on community environment (61.4%), participating in special programs for beginning teachers (53.3%), and adjusting to demands of full-time position (51.6%).

Insert Table 3 about here

After "none," the second most frequently cited source was professional staff of the school. They were cited as the key source of assistance in seven of the 27 activities. Of these seven, two were CURRICULUM, two in STUDENTS, one in COMMUNITY, and two in STAFF. In three of the activities, over 50% of the teachers cited professional staff as assisting them with locating materials

(62.4%), identifying students with special needs (53.6%), and establishing professional relationships (62.9%).

On the one remaining activity, handling discipline (45.6%) in the STUDENTS area, first-year teachers cited administrators most often as the main source of assistance. For the other activities, between .5% to 24.1% teachers mentioned administrators as a source of assistance.

The remaining sources of assistance--community resources, colleges or university, and external consultants--were cited less frequently than the others. The two highest reported activities for which community resources were the main source of assistance were assessing community resources (13.6%) and gathering data on community environment (12.7%). For colleges and universities, the two highest reported activities were obtaining information on research (12.7%), and identifying learning styles (11.2%). External consultants received most recognition for obtaining information on research and perspectives (10.8%).

A third concern of the study related to perceptions based on teaching assignment. It was hypothesized that there would be differences in perceived importance based on teaching assignment. Respondents were asked to rate the importance of staff development activities in the areas of curriculum, students, community, and staff. Table 4 displays the results of four one-way analysis of variance tests. The mean importance of each area was compared among teachers in business, English, foreign language, mathematics, natural science, social science, and miscellaneous areas. The analysis of variance results for CURRICULUM and STAFF were not statistically significant; however, the analysis of variance results for STUDENTS (F=2.7470) and COMMUNITY (F=4.390) were.

Insert Table 4 about here

Specifically, LSD follow-up test indicated that for the importance of STUDENT activities, there were four significant pairwise differences. English teachers (M=5.37), who had the highest mean, perceived STUDENT activities significantly more important than business (M=4.82), mathematics (M=5.00), and natural science (M=5.04) teachers. No other significant pairwise differences existed. Teachers with miscellaneous assignments (M=5.16) perceived STUDENT activities significantly higher than those in business (M=4.82), the group with the lowest mean rating. In the area of COMMUNITY activities, teachers with miscellaneous assignments (M=4.76) perceived COMMUNITY activities significantly more important than business (M=3.72), English (M=4.32), foreign language (M=4.03), mathematics (M=4.03), natural science (M=4.24), and social science (M=4.20) teachers.

The last research area pertained to the perceived success of first-year teachers. Overall, beginning teachers thought they were successful (M=3.83, SD=.79). It was hypothesized that there would be a relationship between the first-year teachers' perceived success and their level of involvement in activities, presence of a staff development program, enrollment in a university course,

gender, community type, district type, and whether they were consulted about staff development activities. Success was measured on a 5-point scale where 1 was not successful and 5 was very successful. A stepwise multiple regression analysis was used to find the optimal subset of variables that would predict success. Gender, community type, district type, enrollment, presence of staff development, and consultation were dummy coded. Level of involvement was the sum of the number of activities teachers engaged in, and importance was the mean importance of at least 20 of the 27 items.

Insert Table 5 about here

As Table 5 shows, two variables were significantly related to success, $F(2,215) = .67$, $p = .0103$. Four percent of the variation in success was related to variation in consultation ($b = .231713$, $p = .0398$) and rural location ($b = -.219762$, $p = .043$). Controlling for location, teachers who were consulted were predicted to have a .23 point higher mean perceived success score than those who were not consulted. And controlling for consultation, teachers from rural districts were predicted to have a .22 point lower mean perceived success score than teachers from suburban or city districts. No other variables were allowed to enter the equation. Thus a significant but weak relationship existed.

Discussion

The four areas examined in this study were the perceived importance of various teacher activities, the perceived importance of these activities by teaching assignment, the sources of assistance for these activities, and the relationship between perceived success of first-year teachers and several staff-development and demographic variables. It was hypothesized that due to recent state and local initiatives, first-year teachers' needs and sources of assistance may differ from what was reported in the literature.

In the area of perceived importance, the responses to the highest rated area, STUDENTS, were similar to past research. Motivating students, handling discipline, evaluating students, and dealing with differences in student ability were major concerns in the past and in this study (Wey, 1948; Dropkin & Taylor, 1963; Stone, 1963; Grant & Zeichner, 1981). One highly rated item that previous research had not discussed much was developing students' self esteem. This concern for students' affective development may indicate a heightened sensitivity to the expanded roles schools assume due to demographic changes in society.

A comparison of STUDENT ratings by assignment showed that English teachers rated the STUDENT activities higher than teachers from other subjects. A possible reason for the difference may be that discussion and student input are greater in English classes than in other subjects. Thus, these teachers may be more aware of students' needs than business, math, and natural science teachers. Further research is needed to determine the reasons for these differences.

In terms of STAFF relationships, adjusting to demands of a full-time position and establishing professional relationships are as important now as they were in the past (Wey, 1948; Hunt, 1968; Grant & Zeichner, 1981; Johnston, 1985; Lipham, Rankin, & Hoeh, 1985). Teachers in all areas rated this area as important; they did not differ by teaching assignment.

Although CURRICULUM and COMMUNITY were rated lower than the previous two categories, some items viewed as important were managing and organizing instruction, refining teaching skills, and locating materials. These items were cited by previous authors as concerns of first-year teachers (Dropkin & Taylor, 1963; Stone, 1963; Hunt, 1968; Grant & Zeichner, 1981; Varah, Theune, & Parker, 1986). As in the STAFF area, there was no significant difference among teachers in their ratings of the importance of the CURRICULUM activities. It was originally thought that teachers with "lab" or "hands-on" classes that require additional resources, materials, and planning would rate these higher, but they did not.

The COMMUNITY area was rated the lowest overall. Only establishing effective communication with parents was rated important (above 5.00). Further, none of the top 10 items were in the COMMUNITY area. Using the community as a resource and understanding the environment were not seen as important despite current trends that emphasize a more active community and parent role in the schools. The one exception to this area was for teachers with miscellaneous assignments. When we compared importance by assignment, teachers of subjects such as physical education, home economics, agriculture, vocational education, art, and music rated the COMMUNITY area significantly higher than all other teachers. These first-year teachers have frequent contact with the community. Many physical eduction teachers are coaches who rely on community support; vocational education, home economics, and agriculture teachers often work in the community, while art and music teachers perform for the public through exhibitions and concerts. Therefore, these teachers may need more help working with the community than others.

The third major area in the study was the sources of assistance for first-year teachers. For 19 of the 27 items, first-year teachers most often cited no source of assistance. Even though all teachers receive some staff assistance as mandated by law, only 16% of the respondents indicated they were in an induction program specifically designed for them, and 31% were consulted about activities. Yet, for over 70% of the items, most first-year teachers did not receive assistance. On eight of the 10 CURRICULUM items, six of the eight STUDENT items, four of the five COMMUNITY items, and two of the four STAFF items, most teachers cited receiving no help. Further, for six of the 10 items rated most important by first-year teachers, none was the most frequently mentioned sources of assistance. Over 50% recorded no help for three of the six items: developing students' self esteem, evaluating students' work, and adjusting to a full-time position. For two items at least 40% cited receiving no assistance: motivating students and managing and organizing instruction. Thus, for some crucial items, many teachers did not receive help. This lack of support may precipitate the reality shock that is mentioned in the literature (Gaede, 1978) or explain why STUDENTS is the highest rated area rather than curriculum. Odell (1986) found that with assistance, first-year teachers' focus

moves from student issues such as discipline and control to curriculum concerns..

Even though none was the predominant response for many items, when they did receive assistance, first-year teachers most frequently cited professional staff. As expected, the staff were the main source for day-to-day needs such as locating materials, identifying teaching strategies, dealing with ability differences, and identifying students' special needs. They also provided information about the community's attitude and helped develop professional relationships. Whether informally or formally, teachers continue to be the major support for beginners.

First-year teachers named administrators as the main source of assistance for handling discipline. Although this is a traditional duty of principals, it was expected principals would be cited more often in other areas due to their instructional leadership role. One reason principals may not be cited as often as expected may be due to the administrator's dual role. On one hand, they are expected to help first-year teachers, but they are also responsible for evaluating first-year teachers' performance. Teachers may be reluctant to admit needs or problems to their evaluator. As Dworkin (1985) observed, principals who are supportive and collegial can expect more positive teacher behaviors. Evaluation programs that use a variety of sources and raters might lead to the type of organizational structure where principals could provide staff development in a supportive and collegial atmosphere.

Last, we examined variables related to first-year teachers' perceived success. It was hypothesized that presence of an induction program, taking a university course, being consulted about staff-development activities, and level of involvement in the teaching activities would positively relate to success. Gender, location of school (rural, suburban, urban), and type of district (high school or unit), were demographic variables also thought to be related. Teachers who were consulted about staff development activities were predicted to have higher success ratings while teachers from rural districts were predicted to have lower success ratings than others. No other variables were related to success.

Generally, most teachers thought they were successful. However, as Lipham, Rankin, and Hoeh (1985) emphasized, beginning teachers should be involved in staff development from the start of their employment. For this sample, consultation was a better predictor of success than presence of staff development geared specifically for first-year teachers. Because few teachers were in special programs, it may not have been a good predictor. Or it may be that first-year teachers who provide input into their programs gain ownership in their own development as teachers. It would be informative to see if teachers who were consulted or had special staff-development programs remained in teaching longer than those who were not consulted and those who did not receive specific attention in their first year. Teachers from rural districts may feel less successful due to the isolation or lack of resources. As Matthes & Carlson (1985) indicated, many beginning teachers are unprepared for rural districts. Staff development addressing unique community characteristics should be considered for teachers. This is an area that can be dealt with by rural districts, universities, or ESCs that serve rural districts.

Although it was no surprise that teachers rated most of the items as important, it was surprising that for many of the activities teachers still do not receive assistance. The difficultly may lie in that even with the legislation in Illinois and other states, staff development problems identified before the 1985 legislation still remain. Some problems were that staff development was fragmented, uncoordinated, inadequately funded, and not consistent across the state (Illinois State Board of Education, 1983). One recommendation of this State panel was that staff development focus on the specific needs of groups of personnel. A prime example of a crucial group are beginning teachers and those preparing for expanded or new assignments. Yet the panel's report noted that because of declining local resources, staff development was likely to be cut from the budget.

States may not be able to provide additional resources, but other areas may be increasing their involvement. The role of universities in this study was minor with few teachers citing them as sources. However, this may be changing; for example, Illinois State University this past year started an induction program with the Peoria school district. Representatives from colleges and departments of education throughout Illinois met for a conference on teacher induction in October 1989. These are some signs that universities may begin to be playing a larger role in induction.

This study's finding are limited to the teachers who responded; however, it will be possible to address other issues when the data from the state on all teachers becomes available this year. ISBE data will allow follow-up studies of both respondents and nonrespondents and of teachers in high and low demand areas to see who returns to teaching. We also want to gather more district data such as wealth, number of teachers, number of new teachers, percent of college preparation, low income, and minority students to see if district characteristics affect whether staff development is offered, and if these characteristics relate to teachers' perceived success and retention. These follow-up studies will help us better understand first-year teachers' needs and concerns.

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Table 1

Demographic characteristics of beginning teachers

	RESPONDENTS n=233		NONRESPONDENTS n=201	
	n	%	n	%
COMMUNITY TYPE				
Rural	83	35.6	80	39.8
Independent City	35	15.0	25	12.4
Suburban	98	42.1	88	43.8
Cental City	17	07.3	08	04.0
TYPE OF DISTRICT				
High School	73	31.3	65	32.3
Unit	153	65.7	135	67.2
Other Public	7	03.0	1	00.5
BACCALAUREATE COLLEGE				
IN-STATE				
Illinois State	31	13.3	12	06.0
Eastern Illinois	25	10.7	23	11.4
Northern Illinois	19	08.2	10	05.0
Western Illinois	15	06.4	9	04.5
Northeastern Illinois	5	02.1	3	01.5
University of Illinois (Champaign)	33	14.2	17	08.5
Sourthernb Illinois (Carbondale & Edwardsville)	11	04.7	20	10.0
All Other Illinois	43	18.5	63	31.3
Total Illinois grads	182	78.1	157	78.2
OUT-OF-STATE				
Indiana	7	03.0	8	04.0
Iowa	15	06.4	11	05.5
Michigan	5	02.1	5	02.5
Wisconsin	9	03.9	12	06.0
Other out-of-state	15	06.4	8	04.0
Total out-of-state	51	21.9	44	21.9
HIGHEST DEGREE HELD				
Baccalaureate	210	90.1	176	87.6
Master's	22	09.4	24	11.9
None or Missing	1	00.5	1	00.5
MAIN TEACHING ASSIGNMENT				
Business	11	04.7	12	06.0
English	37	15.9	35	17.4
Foreign Language	16	06.9	15	07.5
Mathematics	36	15.5	39	19.4
Natural Science	48	20.6	32	15.9
Social Science	22	09.4	16	08.0
Miscellaneous	63	27.0	52	25.9
GENDER				
Male	107	45.7	88	43.8
Female	122	52.1	112	55.7
Missing	5	02.1	1	00.5

Table 2

Perceived level of importance of activities (1=not important, 6=very important)

Activity	M	SD	n	Rank (within area)	Rank (overall)	
CURRICULUM	**4.85**	**.54**	**220**		**3**	
1. Locating materials	5.32	.86	229	4	8	
2. Selecting new textbooks	3.49	1.84	211	10	27	
3. Refining lesson plan skills	4.93	1.07	226	7	16	
4. Obtaining information	3.73	1.42	223	9	25	
5. Managing instruction	5.47	.70	226	1	3	
6. Identifying teaching strategies	5.37	.78	228	3	7	
7. Understanding good test practices	5.03	.83	227	5	13	
8. Identifying learning styles	4.81	.96	224	8	18	
9. Refining teaching skills	5.41	.75	227	2	4	
10. Applying critical thinling skills	4.94	.95	224	6	15	
STUDENTS	**5.13**	**.52**	**227**		**1**	
11. Motivating students	5.72	51	231	1	1	
12. Evaluating students' work	5.40	.60	230	3	5/6	tie
13. Handling discipline	5.63	.69	230	2	2	
14. Dealing with ability differences	5.23	.69	227	5	11	
15. Understanding cultural differences	4.18	1.33	225	8	23	
16. Understanding developmental differ.	4.65	.94	227	7	20	
17. Developing students' self-esteem	5.27	.74	229	4	9	
18. Identifying students with special needs	4.92	.89	227	6	17	
COMMUNITY	**4.32**	**.91**	**212**		**4**	
19. Assessing community resources	3.76	1.41	219	4	24	
20. Gathering data on community environ.	3.53	1.39	212	5	26	
21. Understanding community attitudes	4.70	1.19	223	2	19	
22. Establishing effective communication	5.18	.93	227	1	12	
23. Understanding community expectations	4.44	1.26	225	3	21	
STAFF	**5.00**	**.75**	**212**		**2**	
24. Establishing professional relationships	5.25	.83	228	2	10	
25. Understanding roles & responsibilities	4.99	.95	225	3	14	
26. Participating in special programs	4.33	1.54	214	4	22	
27. Adjusting to ful-time teaching	5.40	1.02	227	1	5/6	tie

Table 3

Main sources of assistance provided to beginning teachers

		MAIN SOURCES OF ASSISTANCE					
		Admin-istrator	Teacher & Staff	Community Resource	College/ University	External Consult	None
	n	%	%	%	%	%	%
CURRICULUM							
1. Locating Materials	229	10.9	62.4	2.6	3.5	2.2	18.3
2. Selecting new textbooks	185	9.7	25.4	2.2	1.1	1.6.	60.0
3. Refining lesson plan skills	222	17.1	26.6	.5	5.4	3.6	46.8
4. Obtaining research information	213	8.0	16.4	6.6	12.7	10.8	45.5
5. Managing & organizing instruction	230	16.8	35.5	.5	3.6	2.7	40.9
6. Identifying teaching strategies	221	18.1	37.1	.9	5.9	7.2	30.8
7. Understanding good testing practices	220	6.8	29.5	1.4	10.9	3.2	48.2
8. Identifying learning styles	204	7.0	25.7	.9	11.2	4.7	50.5
9. Refining teaching skills	222	22.5	31.5	.5	4.1	5.0	36.5
10. Applying critical thinking skills	216	8.3	26.9	.9	5.6	3.2	55.1
STUDENTS							
11. Motivating students	229	10.5	31.9	1.7	5.2	4.8	45.9
12. Evaluating students' work	224	4.5	33.5	.4	6.7	1.8	53.1
13. Handling discipline	226	45.6	29.6	.4	1.3	2.2	20.8
14. Dealing with ability differences	223	4.5	44.4	1.3	4.9	1.8	43.0
15. Understanding cultural differences .	215	9.3	33.5	2.3	2.8	1.9	50.2
16. Understanding developmental differ.	222	7.7	41.4	1.4	6.3	.9	42.3
17. Developing students' self-esteem	227	5.3	27.3	1.8	4.8	3.5	57.3
18. Identifying students' special needs	224	11.2	53.6	1.3	2.7	2.2	29.0
COMMUNITY							
19. Assessing community resources	199	13.1	15.6	13.6	1.5	3.5	52.8
20. Gathering comm. environment data	189	7.4	13.2	12.7	.5	4.8	61.4
21. Understanding community's attitudes	216	24.1	34.3	9.7	.9	4.2	26.9
22. Creating effective communication	218	23.4	32.1	5.5	.5	3.2	35.3
23. Understanding comm. expectations	208	18.8	30.3	10.1	.0	3.4	37.5
STAFF							
24. Creating professional relationships	224	9.8	62.9	1.3	.9	.4	24.6
25. Understanding roles & responsibility	221	20.8	42.5	.9	1.4	.5	33.9
26. Paricipating in special programs	195	11.8	31.8	.0	2.1	1.0	53.3
27. Adjusting to full-time teaching	223	11.7	32.7	.4	.4	3.1	51.6

Table 4

Analysis of variance: Impotance of student and community areas by teacher assignment

	n	M	SD	Significant Pairwise Comparisons
IMPORTANCE OF STUDENT ACTIVITIES				F (6, 224) = 2.474*, p = .0135
1. Business	11	4.82	.784	1 < 7*
2. English	35	5.37	.397	2 > 1*
3. Foreign Language 1	5	5.10	.532	
4. Mathematics	35	5.00	.418	4 < 2*
5. Natural Science	49	5.04	.478	5 < 2*
6. Social Science	23	5.17	.533	
7. Miscellaneous	63	5.16	.541	
IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES				F (6, 209) = 4.390*, p = .0003
1. Business	10	3.72	1.100	1 < 7*
2. English	30	4.32	.933	2 < 7*
3. Foreign Language	5	4.03	.684	3 < 7*
4. Mathematics	34	4.03	.844	4 < 7*
5. Natural Science	46	4.24	.861	5 < 7*
6. Social Science	22	4.20	1.088	6 < 7*
7. Miscellaneous	59	4.76	.744	

* $p < .05$

Table 5

Stepwise multiple regresssion results: Perceived success

R= .20	R^2= .04	F (2,215) = 4.67	p = .0103

VARIABLE	b	Beta	t	p
Consult	.231713	.138829	2.068*	.0398
Rural	-.219762	-.136077	-2.027*	.0430
Intercept	4.295412			

* $p < .05$

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